1-48. (CANCELED)

49. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for automatically inserting at least one small item[[s]], to be transmitted via a mailing service, into an envelope[[s]] via a device comprising:

a storage bin for ~~storage~~ storing envelopes; [[and]]

an ~~means~~ envelope feeding mechanism for successively feeding individual envelopes from the storage bin to a control drum with a periphery of the control drum having at least a vacuum portion[[,]];

an ~~means~~ item feeding mechanism for sequentially moving ~~documents or objects~~ at least one item, to be ~~transmitted~~ inserted, toward ~~said individual envelopes comprising a folded (closing) flap~~ an envelope being conveyed from the storage bin toward an introduction zone by the vacuum portion of the control drum with a sealing flap of the envelope being maintained in an opened position to facilitate insertion of at least one item into the envelope[[,]]; and

an ~~means~~ item inserting mechanism for ~~introducing~~ inserting at least one ~~of these documents or one of these objects~~ of the items into ~~one of said~~ the envelope[[s]] being conveyed by the control drum, and the item inserting mechanism comprising at least one guide, located adjacent the control drum and in the introduction zone, for guiding the at least one item into the opened envelope, and at least one scraper located adjacent an exterior surface of said control drum, for facilitating detachment of the envelope from the vacuum portio of the control drum; and

a discharge mechanism for removing the envelope from the introduction zone once the at least one item is inserted into the envelope conveyed by the control drum., said method comprising the steps of:

storing the envelopes such that the flap of each individual envelope is located on [[the]] a bottom of the envelope and ~~towards a front in the direction of removal~~ adjacent the control drum,

unfolding said flap ~~downwards~~ in the direction of the envelope opening by generating at least one stream of air and by a rotary cam,

moving said envelope flap into contact with an exterior surface of ~~a cylindrical~~ the control drum,

placing said envelope flap against said exterior surface of the control drum by ~~radial~~ suction ~~produced inside said cylindrical~~ via the vacuum portion of the control drum,

individually and successively displacing each envelope by pulling [[its]] the flap placed against the exterior surface of said control drum towards [[a]] the introduction

zone for introduction of one of ~~said documents or one of said objects~~ at least one item into the envelope,

detaching the envelope[[s]] from the control drum by the at least one scraper ~~that is tangential in relation to the exterior surface of said drum~~,

further opening the envelope to facilitate insertion of the at least one item, and

introducing ~~said document or said object~~ the at least one item into said ~~previously~~ opened envelope.

50. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) [[A]] The method according to claim 49 further comprising the step of opening each envelope by opening guides which are inserted into the envelope to open further the envelope and facilitate insertion of the at least one item.

51. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) [[A]] The method according to claim 50 further comprising the step of compressing said enveloped laterally during the insertion of the opening guides to facilitate insertion of the at least one item.

52. (CANCELED)

53. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 65, wherein said control drum (13, 53) comprises on at least a portion of its periphery a covering (17, 57) [[with]] having a high coefficient of friction.

54. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The device according to claim 53, wherein said peripheral covering (17, 57) on said control drum (13, 53) extends over an angular section comprising between 25% and 75% of the periphery.

55. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The device according to claim 53, wherein said peripheral covering (17, 57) on said control drum comprises several parallel bands (18, 58) extending over an angular section comprising at least between 25% to 75% of the periphery.

56. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 65, wherein said rotary cam (14, 54) is driven synchronously with said control drum.

57. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 66, wherein said rotary cam (14, 54) is provided with at least one projection (22, 62) for initiating the unfolding of the flap of each individual envelope.

58. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 66, wherein the control drum (13, 53) and the rotary cam (14, 54) [[are]] have the same diameter and are driven synchronously at the same speed and ~~in that~~ along one portion of their circular trajectory, said rotary cam (14, 54) [[is in]] contacts with the peripheral surface of said control drum (23, 53) to drive one envelope from said storage means (12, 52) towards said introduction zone.

59. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 65, wherein the device comprises several scrapers (25, 65) arranged in parallel to one another, and said scrapers ~~being~~ are located between the parallel bands (18, 58) of said peripheral covering (17, 67) on said control drum.

60. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 65, wherein the device comprises lateral deflectors (36) to push together the lateral edges of said individual envelopes and assist in opening [[them]] of the envelope.

61. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The device according to claim 60, wherein said lateral deflectors (36) comprise guide rollers.

62. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The device according to claim 60, wherein said lateral deflectors (36) comprise guide profiles.

63. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to claim [[52]] 65, wherein said control drum (53) comprises at least two cylindrical segments (80) separated by at least one unattached ring (81).

64. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The device according to claim 63, wherein said unattached ring (81) is formed of a roller.

65. (NEW) A device for automatically inserting at least one small item, to be transmitted via a mailing service, into an envelope via the device, the device comprising:

a storage bin (12, 52) for storing envelopes;

an envelope (15) feeding mechanism for successively feeding individual envelopes (15) from the storage bin to a control drum (13) with a periphery of the control drum (13) having at least a vacuum portion and a roller portion;

an item feeding mechanism for sequentially feeding at least one item, to be inserted, toward an envelope (15) being conveyed from the storage bin toward an introduction zone by the vacuum portion of the control drum (13) with a sealing flap of the envelope (15) being maintained in an opened position to facilitate insertion of at least one item into the envelope (15); and

an item inserting mechanism for inserting at least one of the items into the envelope (15) being conveyed by the control drum (13), and the item inserting mechanism comprising at least one guide (29), located adjacent the control drum (13) and in the introduction zone, for guiding the at least one item into the opened envelope (15), and at least one scraper (25) located adjacent an exterior surface of said control drum (13), for facilitating detachment of the envelope (15) from the vacuum portion of the control drum (13); and

a discharge mechanism for removing the envelope (15), once at least one item is inserted into the envelope (15) conveyed by the control drum (13).

66 (NEW) A device (10, 50) for automatically inserting at least one item into an envelope which is to be transmitted via a mailing service, the device comprising:

a storage bin (12, 52) for storing envelopes;

an envelope feeding mechanism for successively feeding individual envelopes (15) from the storage bin to a control drum (13) with a periphery of the control drum having both a vacuum portion and a roller portion;

an item feeding mechanism for sequentially feeding at least one item, to be inserted, toward an envelope being conveyed by the vacuum portion of the control drum from the storage bin toward the item feeding mechanism with a sealing flap, of the envelope being conveyed by the control drum, being maintained in an opened position, by vacuum, to facilitate insertion of at least one item into the envelope being conveyed by the control drum at an introduction zone; and

an item inserting mechanism for inserting at least one of the items into the envelope being conveyed by the control drum, and the item inserting mechanism comprising at least one guide (29), at least partially located in the introduction zone adjacent the control drum, for guiding the at least one item into the opened envelope, and at least one scraper (25) located tangentially relative to an exterior surface of said control drum, for facilitating detachment of the envelope from the control drum; and

a discharge mechanism, cooperating with the roller portion of the control drum, for discharging the envelope, once at least one item is inserted into the envelope conveyed by the control drum, in a discharge direction away from the at least one guide; and

the envelope feeding mechanism comprises at least one rotary cam (14, 54) for engaging and unfolding the flap of each individual envelope cooperating with at least one stream of air (24, 64) to assist with unfolding the flap in order to open the envelope.